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INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 0428
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1559
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1737
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
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RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0684
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LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/30/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [LY](#) [ER](#)

SUBJECT: LIBYANS IN ERITREA

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for reason 1.4 (d).

[1](#)1. (C) We're Number One

Libya has recently increased by 400% its diplomatic presence in Eritrea (up from 7 to 28 diplomats), making the Libyan Arab Brotherhood Bureau the largest diplomatic mission in Asmara, surpassing in size even the embassy of the former colonial power, Italy. The newly arrived charge d'affaires, Dr. Alhassan Ali Albarouni, told the ambassador during a December 31 courtesy call in the castle-like Libyan chancery that Libya soon hoped to pen mining and fisheries agreements with Eritrea. While Albarouni, a two-time ambassador, was the epitome of suavity, many of the young adults in the Libyan chancery appeared to lack even the semblance of diplomatic patina.

[1](#)2. (C) Somalia and Terrorism

Albarouni said Libya looked forward to the arrival in Tripoli of the new American ambassador and said that he was glad Libyan - U.S. relations were on the mend. Albarouni commented that he had not yet met any of Asmara's resident Somalis and had declined the invitation to attend the December 28 ceremony marking the first anniversary of Ethiopia's "invasion" of Somalia hosted by Somali oppositionists at a local hotel. The ambassador said he also declined the invitation and underscored U.S. concern regarding reports of destabilizing Eritrean behavior in Somalia, adding that Libya knew better than most the consequences of being named to the State Sponsor of Terrorism list.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Bio Note

Dr. Alhassan Ali Albarouni serves as permanent charge d'affaires of the Libyan embassy in Asmara. Previous assignments include postings as ambassador to Brazil and Djibouti, where he said he knew Ambassadors Yamamoto, Ragsdale, and, briefly, Symington. He is married and has one school-aged daughter. He has a doctorate in ancient Libyan history and has served as director of the Libyan diplomatic

training institute. He seemed outgoing and friendly and speaks passable English.

Minimize Considered.

MCMULLEN